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United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

December 27, 1990

Mr. Aryeh Neier  
Executive Director  
Human Rights Watch  
485 Fifth Avenue  
New York, New York

Dear Mr. Neier:

I am replying on behalf of Secretary Baker to the letter you sent him on November 29 concerning the visit of Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen.

As you are probably aware from media reporting, human rights issues were the primary focus of Minister Qian's meetings in Washington, both at the State Department and at the White House. Both the President and the Secretary stressed to him that the American people are deeply concerned about respect for internationally recognized human rights in China, and that these concerns will constrain our ability to work together unless the Chinese government addresses them forthrightly and effectively. The Secretary specifically raised the cases of Wang Juntao and Chen Ziming in this context. Minister Qian acknowledged in his pre-departure press conference that the Secretary had told him that human rights are a cornerstone of American policy.

As a result of the Qian visit, the Chinese government issued an unprecedented invitation for our Assistant Secretary for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs, Richard Schifter, to visit China. During his December 17-21 visit, he reinforced and amplified the concerns expressed to Minister Qian in Washington with a wide range of senior Chinese officials. We are cautiously hopeful that Ambassador Schifter's trip will mark the beginning of a productive dialogue with the Chinese leadership on human rights issues.

During his visit, Ambassador Schifter gave Chinese authorities a list of some 150 individuals who appear to have been detained solely for nonviolent expression of political views or for legitimate religious activities. He asked that the authorities provide information on these cases in subsequent discussions with our diplomats in China. Most if not all of those on the list you provided to us were also on the list Ambassador Schifter presented in Beijing.

In addition, Ambassador Schifter reinforced Secretary Baker's recommendations that Chinese authorities release all those detained for nonviolent political or religious activity, and that any trials of such persons be open to foreign observers.

Please be assured that, like you, we will not be satisfied until all those imprisoned for nonviolent political activities have been released. Thank you for sharing your views with us.

Sincerely,



Kent M. Wiedemann, Director  
Office of Chinese and  
Mongolian Affairs

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